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ABSTRACT

This literature review examines the influence of teacher gender on child behavior and development from nursery school through the later elementary school grades. Implications of social learning and cognitive theories of gender identification and development are explored, and several studies of the effects of male teachers on students, as well as anecdotal reports, are critically reviewed. Design limitations of many of the studies are pointed out. A few studies of nursery and kindergarten children indicate that male teachers may positively affect boys' perceptions of spatial relations, attitudes, perception of teacher and school environment, sex-role identification, and behavior. Only one of the reviewed studies of early elementary school children provided significant or unconfounded positive findings. Among later elementary school students, male teachers were found to have positively influenced boys' reading vocabulary, comprehension, arithmetic reasoning, mathematical problem solving, teacher-pupil identification, school related self-concepts, perception of teacher-student relationship and consensual view of school. In later elementary grades, male teachers may positively influence boys' masculine sex-role preference and lower psychological effeminancy scores. Overall, few findings indicate that the presence of male teachers provides significant and important benefits. Many other variables may be more important. (Author/RH)

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DO MALE TEACHERS IN THE EARLY SCHOOL YEARS MAKE A DIFFERENCE? A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE*

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DO MALE TEACHERS IN THE EARLY SCHOOL YEARS MAKE A DIFFERENCE? A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Over a long period of time parents, teachers, and psychologists have made frequent and intense demands for more male teachers at the early school levels (Firester & Firester, 1974-75; Hull, 1969; Sexton, 1969; Slaughter, 1969; St. John, 1932; Vairo, 1969). It has been claimed that male teachers would foster better development of children, particularly that of boys, and thus would alleviate some of the greater number of school problems boys have compared to girls. This greater incidence of problems is illustrated by boys' higher failure rates and higher rates of referrals to specialists for difficulties related to the classroom (Gates, 1961; Johnson, 1976; Vroegh, 1976).

Many of the demands for more male teachers have provided only polemics to support their assertions of benefits to children. Others have attempted to provide a rationale for their claims. For instance, it has been claimed that female teachers cannot teach boys as well as male teachers (Peltier, 1968). The latter are thought to be better able to deal with boys' presumably more active behavior in the classroom and also to aid boys in

achieving masculine sex identity (Slaughter, 1969; Vairo, 1969). Some educators have also argued that female teachers favour girls inasmuch as the teachers have expectancies for student behaviors that are more difficult for boys to meet than for girls. Goebes and Shore (1975), for example, found that teachers considered girls to be closer to the ideal than boys on a sloppy-neat continuum, as well as closer to the ideal on other preferred qualities. In addition, it has been argued that the education system at the lower levels is loaded with traditionally feminine values. Thus, it is hoped that the presence of male teachers would "defeminize" the milieu (Sexton, 1969). Sexton takes one of the most extreme positions, arguing that female teachers, resentful of their generally inferior position in society, are actively hostile against masculine boys.

Some of the differential difficulty rate in school adjustment between boys and girls is conjectured to be due to such factors as sex differences in psychological and physiological rate of maturation, but a major contributory factor is also thought to be the greater incompatibility between expected pupil role and sex role for boys (Dwyer, 1976b; Lee & Voivadas, 1977; Waller, 1969). Presumably having more male teachers in the public school system would alter either the psychological environment of the school or boys' concepts of their sex roles so as to

create greater compatibility between the two. Arguments favouring an increase in male teachers appear to assume either explicitly or implicitly that male and female teachers differ in basic characteristics and teaching styles in such a way as to make a measurable qualitative difference in their effect on children. As well, the assumption is made by some concerned parents and professionals that children need exposure to male teachers per se. It has been asserted that since young children are brought up primarily by their mothers and other females, the relative scarcity of their contact with adult males leads them to need and to value contact with male adults more highly than with female adults (Le Triplett, 1968; Maglio, 1977; Strickler & Phillips, 1970). This argument is thought particularly relevant in the case of boys reared in fatherless families or in homes where contacts with fathers are relatively few or inadequate. Ultimately, the contention that more male teachers should be hired is based upon the assumption that there is a difference in boys' adjustment, achievement and attitudes when taught by male rather than female teachers.

This review of the literature will touch upon the first two assumptions, and will focus on studies examining the development and behavior of young boys and girls in the early school years in relation to the sex of the teacher.

It is noteworthy that most of the arguments and research in this area have not attempted to fit into a theoretical context, relying instead upon common sense, an alluring but sometimes untrustworthy guide. Nonetheless, two major theories of gender identification and development, the cognitive developmental and the social learning theories, are relevant to this question. Their theoretical implications as to how and the extent to which male and female teachers do differ in their impact on children will be considered. Both theories have been discussed extensively elsewhere (Bandura, 1969, 1977; Kohlberg, 1966, 1969, 1974; Mischel, 1970) and consequently will be described very briefly in this paper.

Theoretical Context

The social learning theory emphasizes the learning of sex roles as influenced by environmental variables. Male teachers presumably could differ as socialization agents for boys from female teachers in two ways. Firstly, if there actually are important differences between female and male teachers' expectancies, teaching styles, and reinforcement contingencies for student behaviors, so that greater congruence could be predicted between the values and expectancies of male teachers and boys than between those of female teachers and boys, then male teachers' expectancies, teaching styles and reinforcement contingencies could function as intervening

variables to mediate boys' student behavior more effectively. Such greater congruence could presumably facilitate the selective shaping of pupil role and male sex role in such a way as to make them more compatible.

However, the research examining male teachers' expectancies, reinforcement contigencies and teaching styles has not proved them greatly different from those of female teachers (Arnold, 1968; Lahaderne, 1976; Vroegh, 1976). Brophy and Good (1974) summarize the literature by concluding that male teachers treat boys and girls similarly to the way female teachers do. More recent studies also support this position. For example, Robinson (1977) found that the personality characteristics and reinforcement contigencies of male and female caregivers in childcare centers were similar. Thus, there is not much research support for the belief that male teachers would differ greatly from female teachers in functioning as a source of expectancies and reinforcement.

The second function of male teachers, as predicted by social learning theory, revolves about their possible role as male models. For young boys who are trying to evolve a sex role differentiated from that of females, contact on a daily and prolonged basis with male teachers should serve to help clarify their conception of the masculine sex-role. In addition, since children are generally reinforced for imitating same-sex models (Mischel, 1970), male models should

also give boys more opportunity and incentive to imitate a male functioning in an academic setting.

However, there are a number of factors which serve to mitigate the effectiveness of the male teacher as a model for boys. On the basis of their extensive review of the experimental literature, Maccoby & Jacklin (1974) conclude that young children do not characteristically select the model whose sex matches their own. Barkley, Ullman, Oho & Brecht (1977), in a more recent review, conclude that the sex of the model is of less importance than the sex-appropriateness of the modelled behavior relative to the observer. Thus as children's conceptions of sex-appropriate behavior become developed, the impact of male teachers as models should be considerably reduced since boys would presumably characteristically be more influenced by behavior that they perceive to be suitable to them rather than the behavior the male teacher exhibits per se. In addition, it is important to emphasize that a great deal of children's information about appropriate sex-role behavior is given by peers (Lynn, 1969; Mischel, 1970): mass media (Sternglanz & Serbin, 1974), and other sources over which parents and teachers have limited control. These sources have not regarded academic behavior at early school levels as particularly masculine. In this context of interacting mitigating factors, it is quite possible that encountering male teachers would not have any

significant effects upon boys' development, particularly since the teacher-student role network of interaction is so salient in the classrooms, that the behaviors of the male teachers might not be perceived as relevant or suitable models by boys. Finally, it should be noted that male teachers in the classroom are not usually concerned with providing an example of particularly masculine behavior, but rather supposely are concerned with providing examples of values and behavior that are suitable for both girls and boys.

It is possible, nevertheless, that for young boys at the nursery and kindergarten level, who would not yet have as well developed conceptions of sex roles as do older children, the effect of the male teacher could be to make certain behaviors be perceived as masculine sex-appropriate because they are being performed by males. Bandura (1969) has indicated the importance of motivational factors in reproducing behavior and consequently it could be predicted that more academically oriented behavior could be copied from male teachers by young boys who learn to see such behavior as fitting within their gender role.

There is one more way in which a male model might influence boys. If boys are relatively deprived of contact with adult males, they could value such contact when it does occur more so than contact with adult females. As mentioned

earlier, a central rationale for the proposed increase of male teachers at early school levels is the provision of a male presence for children from homes where the father is absent or not particularly salient. In a review of the literature, Shinn (1978) concluded that children perform more poorly on cognitive tests if the father is absent or has little supportive interaction with them. Biller's (1970) review reported that boys with absent fathers have masculine development deficits as well as intellectual ones. Boys in particular are thought to suffer from the absence of the father or low levels of positive interaction with the father. At the nursery and kindergarten level, Radin (1973), Reis & Gold (1977) and Fowler (1977) have found that boys from such homes suffer in their intellectual development, while Coonrod (1977), Mussen and Distler (1959), Santrock (1970), & Shelton (1973) have found that they suffer in masculine sex-role development.

Anecdotal case histories given by the advocates of male teachers also present this argument, stressing the importance of providing a male presence for boys who are relatively deprived of contact with males (Sciarra, 1971-72). However, the one study that controlled for the presence of the father when examining boys' achievement in relation to the sex of the teacher did not have positive findings (Wroegh, 1973; Vroegh, 1976). However, this study was

conducted at the fifth grade. Stronger effects could be expected to occur at the younger age levels.

To summarize, the social learning theory leads to three possible predictions: that young boys with male teachers could develop more adequate concepts of and presumably preference for masculine behavior; secondly, that these boys could be more likely to perceive academic behavior as masculine; and thirdly, that they could be more likely to engage in such behavior. However, such effects should not be large due to the mitigating factors discussed above. It would also seem that for male teachers to have any effects, they should work in classrooms with very young children at the nursery, kindergarten and early elementary school level.

The cognitive developmental theory stresses the central position of the child's gender identity in organizing his or her values, attitudes and behavior. Kohlberg (1966) postulates that the child has an egocentric tendency to value positively anything associated with or like himself and "values and seeks objects and activities that are representative of his own sex" (Mussen, 1969, p. 725). Hence, the major impact of the male teacher on the development of young boys should be to extend the boys' concepts of masculine behavior to include academic values and objects. However, Kohlberg (1969) also argues that the developed sex-role

concepts of young children are relatively insensitive to environmental variations but stem from the child's interpretations of physical differences between the sexes and the apparent social ramifications of these differences, so that contact with male teachers is unlikely to have much impact upon children. Again, it is possible to argue that intense, prolonged contact with many male teachers should have some effect on very young boys who do not yet have well developed sex-role stereotypes. However, it can equally well be argued that as children become more sophisticated cognitively with increasing maturity, male teachers should be able to modify older children's sex-role concepts more easily than those of younger children who can only process relatively simple concepts of sex-roles. In other respects, the cognitive developmental approach, since it tends to minimize environmental inputs, would predict little effects due to the presence or absence of male teachers.

Both social learning and cognitive developmental theories would also predict individual differences in the responsitivity of boys to male teachers. Social learning theory places emphasis on variations due to specific situational stimuli and reinforcement patterns. Particular reinforcement histories could cause certain boys to respond selectively to specific types of socialization agents such as male teachers. For example, working-class boys could

very well be more responsive to male than to female teachers. Similarly, Kohlberg's position leads to the prediction that boys who identify highly with the masculine role should find the activities of male rather than female teachers more appealing. This hypothesis is supported by the finding that boys who identified highly with the masculine role were more effectively conditioned by male experimenters than by female experimenters (Epstein & Liverant, 1963). Consequently, although both theories would predict some, though not a strong, influence of male teachers on boys' sex-role and academic development, it might be more interesting to look at selected subgroups whom male teachers might particularly influence.

There are fewer theoretical implications of the presence of male teachers for girls. The cognitive developmental theory would lead to the prediction that male teachers should have little or no effect on girls' gender identity unless the school environment becomes so dominated by male teachers as to cause the young girl to conceive of academic values as masculine, as sometimes occurs with students at the higher educational levels. As far as the social learning theory is concerned, again it can be predicted that girls should be minimally influenced by the presence of the male teacher, particularly if the expectancies, reinforcement contigencies and teaching styles seem basically similar

for male and female teachers. As Lee & Voivadas (1977) point out, however, even though the negative effects of any incompatibilities that exist between pupil role and sex role are readily apparent for boys, the very congruence of sex role with pupil role for girls in the school system probably has more subtle and possibly even more invidious effects on girls, relating to their later relatively lower achievement.

Sex of Teacher and Children's Performance in Nursery and Kindergarten Children

Only a small number of controlled studies directly compare the effects of male and female teachers on young boys and girls and these yield few results that are both significant and important. These studies will be evaluated with emphasis placed upon three major areas of children's development, school adjustment, gender development, and academic and intellectual achievement.

A thorough attempt to defeminize the nursery classroom was undertaken by Abbott (1969) who followed the development of 27 boys through all-boy kindergarten and grade one classes taught by a male teacher and male teaching aides (Le Triplett, 1968). Even with such a comprehensively masculine environment, the effects were not as strong and consistent as one might expect from previous claims. At the completion of the kindergarten year the boys in the all-male class did not

differ significantly on masculine sex-role identification scores from the boys in the coeducational class, although by the end of the second year the experimental boys' scores were higher. The results of this study indicated that the masculine environment over a long term raised male sex-role identification scores and produced somewhat more favorable attitudes towards school with some tendency to view a few of the accoutrements of school as more masculine, but no improved personality adjustment was associated with the more masculine environment. According to Brophy and Good (1974) a follow-up study of these boys reported that the boys who had had male teachers retained their higher masculinity scores and had better school attendance than the other boys. It should be noted that no measures of achievement were taken. It is also important to emphasize that this study appears to have confounded the variables of sex of teacher and sex-segregated classrooms. Consequently, it is impossible to determine which variable accounts for the effects found.

Brophy and Laosa (1973) studied kindergarten children taught by a married couple using a male-oriented curriculum. This class was compared to children taught by a sole female teacher using a standard curriculum. No consistent significant differences were found between the two groups on measures of sex typing, sociometric play patterns, attitudes towards school, and various measures of abilities

and task performance. The only noteworthy finding was the poorer performance on spatial ability of boys and girls taught by the female teacher, with the difference being significant for the first year sample and not replicated the following year. Brophy & Good (1974) judge this finding of greater gains in spatial ability by children taught by the male-female team as relatively unimportant and explainable in terms of the masculine content of the curriculum alone. It should be noted that this study confounded the number and sex of teacher by the use of one experimental team composed of a male and a female teacher versus only one female control teacher. The fact that the male-female team were a married couple adds another unusual aspect to the study. For example, they may have been perceived by their students as less differentiated from each other than male and female teachers in general are perceived by students. Such factors might serve to reduce the impact of the male teacher.

Sciarra (1971) investigated the effects of eight weeks of exposure to male role models on the behavior of preschool disadvantaged boys, most of whom were black. Using role models who were business employee volunteers rather than qualified teachers they found no significant differences between groups of children exposed to male role models and a group exposed to female models.

However, trends in the data suggested that boys' aggressive behaviors became more unstable while exposed to male models and that interest in school declined during a period of intermittent exposure to the model after a period of daily exposure. In addition, anecdotal teacher reports suggested that the school and home behavior of some children with problems of aggression and withdrawal improved.

One study was conducted with children from 18 classes taught by teams of two female teachers or a male and a female teaching team (Lee & Wolinsky, 1973). Preschool to second grade classes were sampled. The boys preferred male teachers and although they in general perceived male teachers as not favoring either sex, they also perceived them as strongly preferring boys when asked to specify the teacher's favorite child. The authors interpreted these results as indicating that the boys affiliated themselves with the male teachers.

Another study conducted at the preschool level (Gold, Reis & Berger, Note 1) also found some slight significant effects. This study compared four-year-old boys and girls taught by one of eight teams composed of a male and female teacher with children taught by one of five teams composed of two female teachers. Boys taught by the mixed-sex team tended to improve more on a measure of

mathematical achievement than boys taught only by female teachers, although the boys still performed more poorly than the girls in the study. In addition, boys and girls were rated significantly more favorably on their classroom behavior by both members of the male-female teaching teams than were children by the female teaching team members. The girls taught by the male-female team received more favorable ratings from the female teachers than did any of the other children from their teachers. If the female teachers did express bias towards girls in their ratings, they did so only when teaching with a male. Sex of teacher did not relate to the children's gender development, school enjoyment or self-confidence. Similarly, the teacher's sex-role orientation revealed no consistent significant pattern of association with the children's performance. However, these results reflect only a four-month period of contact with the teachers.

The studies conducted with preschool children therefore provide only slight support for the hypotheses that when boys are taught by male teachers, they have a greater masculine sex identification, better performance in mathematics and spatial aptitude, and better attitudes towards and behavior in school (see Table I). Because of the different questions asked and different measures used, none of these findings have been substantiated by more

than one study. Finally, it is noteworthy that each study reported more failures to find results than significant outcomes.

Children in Early Elementary Grades

A handful of studies have also examined the relation of the sex of the instructor to the development of children in the first three grades. Studies at this level have not produced positive findings with the exception of that of Lee & Wolinsky (1973), as previously indicated.

One project (Gentile, 1974) found that female rather than male tutors facilitated better reading achievement gains on one of two measures for Spanish-American boys in the second and third grades, while at the fourth grade level, tutor sex was not a significant factor. Another study (Crawford, Elliot & Johanson, 1972) attempting to improve boys' reading skills, found that male reading helpers were able to improve significantly the reading achievement scores of boys in grades 1 to 6 compared to boys in control classes who only participated in the regular school reading program. However, this study used only male aides and consequently reveals nothing about the relative efficacy of male and female teachers. Improvement in reading achievement scores could be caused by additional instruction and stimulation regardless of the sex of the reading aide.

McFarlane (1969-70) found that the participation of men in first grade instruction did not significantly improve either reading or mathematics achievement scores, or masculine sex-preference. However, pupils who identified with the male figure did achieve arithmetic, reading, and personality adjustment socres that were consistently, though not significantly, higher. In this study, the participating males were not fully qualified teachers. Instead, they were education students who functioned as aides junior to a female instructor, factors which may have limited their influence on the children.

None of these studies supports the contention that children in the first three grades would derive greater benefit for their academic or intellectual achievement, sex role identification, or school adjustment by having male rather than female teachers. Nor do laboratory analogues of this type of classroom study support this contention. Peterson (1972) used male and female experimenters to test boys and girls in a paired-associate learning task which was conceived as an analogue to the task of learning to read. Children in the first and fifth grades were studied. The sex of the experimenter was found to have no relation to paired-associate learning performance, which did not differ for girls and boys. Pedersen, Shinedling and Johnson (1968) studied the performance of grade 3 girls

and boys when tested by male and female examiners on the arithmetic subtest of the WISC. A significant sex of subject by sex of examiner interaction was found such that subjects scored best when tested by examiners of the same sex. However, this was due primarily to the performance of the girls, with the boys' scores not differing significantly in the two conditions. Consequently, Pedersen et al. advanced the hypothesis that female mathematics teachers would aid the school performance of girls. This hypothesis was not supported in a later study with fifth grade children (Shinedling & Pedersen, 1970).

Studies with Older Children

Studies with children in the latter elementary school grades generally fail to support the hypothesis that male teachers particularly benefit school children, although, again there are some partially supportive findings (see Table I). Smith (1971) studying only boys, found that 5th grade boys had lower psychological effeminacy scores, better school related self-concepts, and better mathematical problem-solving scores than boys taught by female teachers. Another study with a small group of children at the fourth grade level, found that male teachers facilitated the academic performance of boys on reading vocabulary, reading comprehension, and arithmetic reasoning measures (Shinedling

& Pedersen, 1970). Steele (1967) also studying only boys, found that being taught by male teachers did not influence their reading achievement, but did increase masculine sex-role preference and teacher-pupil identification in 4th grade boys. It has also been found that sixth grade students perceived their relationships to be more positive with male than with female teachers (Forslund & Hull, 1972; Hull, 1969). An English study (Murray, 1977) found that even though female teachers were perceived by their students as having a more consensual view of the school system than male teachers, the students of the male teachers had more consensual attitudes than those of female teachers. Despite these findings, the students with female teachers had higher scores in mathematics and English.

In general, however, the majority of the studies with older children have concluded that the sex of the teacher is not a significant variable (Brophy & Good, 1974; Vroegh, 1976). It is also noteworthy that some studies have found that female rather than male teachers produce superior results in the performance and attitudes of boys and girls (Lahaderne, 1976; Ober, 1974). Finally, it is also worth noting that some studies conducted at the post-elementary level suggest that the sex of the teacher interacts in a complex fashion with other variables to influence student performance. Such variables as the sex-

typed nature of the school subject and the psychological masculinity-femininity scores of the teacher and the student appear to be relevant (Halperin, 1971; Rothman, Welch & Walberg, 1969; Toback, 1973; Walberg, Welch & Rothman, 1969).

Anecdotal Reports

There are a number of highly enthusiastic anecdotal-type reports describing the benefits of male teachers and male teaching aides in classrooms (Kyselka, 1966; Maglio, 1977; Le Triplett, 1968; Sciarra, 1971-72). These reports are not commensurate with the partial and negative findings of the controlled studies. However, many such reports describe classes which are not only taught by males but are also gender segregated and incorporate and stress male-oriented curricula and activities, thus making it difficult to tease out possible differential effects. As well, anecdotal descriptions of these kinds of classroom situations report benefits to kindergarden and early elementary school boys in areas related to sex-identity, school enjoyment, behavior management and emotional adjustment rather than in areas of achievement. Anecdotal reports often stress the importance of qualitative factors such as the level of masculinity of male teachers and their skill in interacting with and teaching children. Such factors are difficult to

control and are usually not manipulated in the studies. In addition, unlike the controlled studies, positive anecdotal reports often focus on specific children with particular behavior or emotional problems, rather than reporting general trends. Finally, it is worth mentioning the obvious point that the subjective and uncontrolled nature of the anecdotal reports makes it difficult to evaluate them accurately.

Interestingly, there are anecdotal descriptions of all-boy, masculine curriculum programs involving female rather than male teachers that are similarly enthusiastic (Burgdorf, 1970; Kernkamp & Price, 1972; Ring, 1970; Strickler & Phillips, 1970). In addition, it has been found that boys taught by female teachers in an all-boy classroom are more likely to perceive reading in a classroom setting as masculine (McCraken, 1973). These reports lead to the tentative suggestion that the effect of male teachers is relatively minor compared to that of male-segregated classrooms and masculine programs. However, some controlled studies have found that segregating classrooms by sex does not lead to improvements in performance or behavior (Tagatz, 1966). In addition, large scale studies in England comparing sex-segregated and integrated schools concluded that the coeducational schools provided more favorable environments for both boys' and girls'

academic and social adjustment (Dale, 1969, 1971, 1973-74, 1974). The weak research support given to the hypotheses of beneficial effects due to male teachers or sex-segregated classrooms leaves "masculine" school programs as a leading contender for alleviation of the greater difficulty boys experience in schools. It has already been shown that boys' reading performance varies with the format and content of the presentation (Dwyer, 1976a). Girls could also benefit from similar programs, which place emphasis upon the active participation of the child (Zimet, 1976).

Conclusions

There is a general lack of findings that are both significant and important indicating benefits for boys' sex identification, academic achievement, and school adjustment accrued from the presence of male teachers. This supports the contention based on social learning and cognitive developmental theories that although the presence of male teachers could be associated with some positive effects for boys, they are not likely to differ greatly from female teachers in their influence on boys. Furthermore, the results of such studies as have been made also support the theoretically based contention that the performance of girls is not related to the sex of the teacher. These results are in agreement with the emphasis in modelling studies on the

importance of the sex appropriateness of the behavior modelled rather than on the sex of model. It is interesting that the majority of the studies that do report some positive findings are conducted with either very young or older children, as expected from the two theories (see Table I).

While the sex of the teacher, as is clear from the studies in the field, is not a major explanatory factor of student sex differences, there are enough positive results scattered in the literature to suggest it may have some relevance to children's performance and development. There is some slight evidence suggesting that nursery and kindergarten boys taught by male teachers may have greater masculine sex identification, better mathematics and spatial aptitude scores, and better school attitudes and behavior. Studies of children in the first three grades, however, almost unanimously have failed to yield positive findings. Studies with children in the later elementary school grades have mostly concluded that the sex of the teacher is not an important variable, but gains have sporadically been reported for boys' masculine identification, mathematics and reading scores, and school attitudes when taught by male teachers.

In general, the question of the possible effects of male teachers has been investigated only sparsely.

Furthermore, many studies suffer from design limitations. These include: brief duration of student contact with male teachers, unequal status of male and female teachers, disproportionate concentration of studies at about the fifth grade level, lack of studies examining effect of male teachers on students with particular problems, failure to sample female as well as male teachers, use of too small a teacher or student sample, the confounding of the variable sex of male teacher with that of sex-segregated classrooms, and a general absence of observational measures. Possible differences in teacher characteristics that often seem to be ignored include teachers' age, amount of training, years of experience, level of masculinity and qualitative aspects of teaching styles. Lack of controls was sometimes noted vis-a-vis the family background characteristics of students, such as paternal availability and socioeconomic and marital status of the parents. Failure to study girls as often and extensively as boys and failure to measure scholastic achievement can also be considered as important limitations in the scope of some studies. Bearing in mind the limitations of these studies, it appears that even though the teacher's gender may have some relation to student performance, it does not have a direct, overriding influence, appears to be much more salient for male rather than female students, and does not appear to be as

important as many other variables (Brophy & Good, 1974; Stasz, Weinberg & McDonald, 1974).

Increasing the number of male teachers in the early school grades is a proposed panacea to alleviate boys' school difficulties which is relatively circumscribed, flexible, and appeals to common sense as well as to widespread bias. However, it is an alternative which likely will not be effective. The difficulties boys experience in school appear to be based, at least in part, on somewhat incompatible demands of the male sex role and student role. These roles are defined by widespread social and institutional factors rather than simply by the presence or absence of male teachers. Within the school system, other answers besides just increasing the number of male teachers must be sought, for instance, masculine-oriented curricula that require a more active response from students, may warrant closer scrutiny. However, solutions that extend beyond the school system and are varied, complex and sophisticated are required, and such changes are often difficult to effect.

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Table 1

Studies Reviewed Showing Positive Effects of Male Teachers on Boys

	Abilities School Achievement	School Related Attitudes, Enjoyment	Sex-Role	Behaviour
Nursery and Kindergarten				
Abbot (1968)		better attitudes	better sex-role identification, some school objects perceived as masculine	
Brophy & Evertson (1973)	better spatial relations, not replicated			
Lee & Wolinsky (1973)		male teachers seen by boys as preferring boys. (Kindergarten to Grade 2)		
Gold, Reis & Berger (Note 1)				better behavior ratings by teachers

con'td.

Table 1 (cont'd.)

	Abilities School Achievement	School Related Attitudes, Enjoyment	Sex-Role	Behaviour
Grades 1 - 3		No positive findings		
Grades 4 - 6				
Steele (1967)		more teacher-pupil identification	greater masculine sex-role preference	
Shinedling & Pedersen (1970)	better reading vocabulary, comprehension, arithmetic reasoning			
Smith (1971)	better mathematical problem-solving	improved school-related self-concepts	lower psychological effeminacy scores	
Forslund & Hull (1972); Hull (1969)		perceived relationships with male teachers as more positive		
Murray (1977)		more consensual view of school		